



## BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

### INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

**PROVIDER:** The Oxford Institute

**ADDRESS:** 103-105 Avenue 3  
The Covered Market  
Oxford  
OX1 3DY

**HEAD OF PROVIDER:** Nazish Gulzar, Adnan Rafiq and Ayyaz Mallick

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 8 August 2019

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** 28 November 2019

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the provider**

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The Oxford Institute (the Provider) is the trading name of Oxbridge Education Network Limited, which is a private limited company. It was formed in February 2013. Through the courses offered, the Provider aims to introduce potential Oxbridge students to the rich environment and variety of learning typically found within the collegiate tutorial system. This is achieved through a short summer residential programme, which is held in a central University of Oxford college. The programme is designed to prepare participants for entry to Oxford or Cambridge University.

The college has extensive academic, social and recreational facilities including residential accommodation for the participants. The Oxford Museum of National History annexe, which is located near the college, is also booked for participants' presentations and for lectures by visiting academics. The Provider's administrative office is in the home of one of the Directors.

The day-to-day aspects of the programme, including academic management, are managed by three directors. They are supported by a network of self-employed Oxford qualified trainers and mature graduates who are contracted over the periods immediately prior to and during the delivery of the programme. An additional part-time self-employed member of staff has joined the Provider as an Embedded Advisor.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The residential summer school programme, which is entitled the Oxford Experience, is a full-time two-week face-to-face programme. It allows participants to gain a comprehensive experience of a typical student's life at Oxford University because they live in a typical student's environment. They take part in small group tuition with an Oxford University trainer and learn about some key topics in their chosen specialist subjects. These include Medicine, Engineering, Physics, Mathematics, History, Music, Fine Art, English Literature, Creative Writing, Law, Business Studies, Economics, Politics and Law.

The participants engage in small group tutorials, presentations and debates, with each picking one major, and one minor, subject. They also carry out research to produce an essay and presentation on a chosen topic. Through these activities, they develop the knowledge and skills that are relevant to a typical Oxford University application and interview. In addition, the participants have timetabled recreational activities, such as sports and bowling, visit some historic venues in Oxford and go on a trip to London.

There were 116 participants on the programme at time of this inspection. The majority of participants were female and a minority were aged between 16 and 17. All participants were from outside the United Kingdom (UK) with countries represented including Japan, China, United States of America, Bangladesh, India and the largest group coming from Pakistan.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day at the University of Oxford college where the Provider was delivering its Oxford Experience programme. Meetings were held with the three Directors, the Embedded Advisor, a group of participants and a group of trainers. One teaching session was observed and the inspector also completed a short tour of the teaching spaces and the student common room. Various documentation was reviewed. The Provider's staff engaged fully with the inspection process.

### **4. Inspection History**

<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Stage 2	29 April 2013

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Stage 3	7 August 2013
Interim	20 August 2014
Re-accreditation	19-20 July 2017

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## **PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

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The Provider moved delivery of its Oxford Experience programme from Keble College to University College in 2018. This has enabled it to increase the number of participants that can be accommodated, so that it now plans for a maximum of 120 in each cohort.

An additional part-time self-employed member of staff has been added to the Provider's core team as an Embedded Advisor. This post provides additional academic oversight and engages with participants and teaching staff throughout the delivery of a programme. The postholder also establishes links with any teaching staff who accompany participants from their home school or college and identifies ways to engage them with the programme.

### **2. Response to actions points in last report**

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*1.1 Information, such as job titles indicated in promotional materials and literature for participants, must be clearly defined and re-aligned to match that in job descriptions and the organisational chart must be revised to include trainers and part-time administrators.*

The current organisational chart is up-to-date, clear, comprehensive and accurate. Published materials are generally accurate but do not reflect the most recent changes in personnel. The Provider is aware of the updates that are needed before the next recruitment cycle and has appropriate processes in place to identify and implement the changes that are needed.

*19.3 The Provider's complaints procedures must be revised to incorporate BAC's own complaints procedure.*

The Provider's complaints procedure, which is included in the student handbook given to all participants, incorporates BAC's complaints procedure.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

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*It is recommended that the Provider reviews all its policies and the website to eliminate any minor typographical errors.*

Published materials now meet a good standard of accessibility and typographical accuracy.

*It is recommended that trainers provide written reports of their feedback on the courses to be used for improvement planning.*

Written and oral feedback is collected from trainers and reviewed by the Embedded Advisor, in discussion with the Directors, to produce a report and action plan of improvements that can be implemented on future courses.

*The Provider should consider introducing an annual audit report, which includes an analysis of the feedback from participants and trainers. This would enable the Provider to systematically evaluate and improve all aspects of the programme and provide useful information for stakeholders.*

In addition to the feedback collected from trainers, participants are encouraged to give informal feedback during a course and give formal written feedback at the end. In addition, as part of the annual recruitment process, the directors visit a number of schools and colleges which regularly send participants and gather feedback from teachers there. These various sources of information are drawn together in a useful operational document

which is used to inform the planning process for future programmes. Updates on feedback received and any changes made to the provision are given to regular school and college contacts.

*The Provider should review the information provided to participants to ensure that it contains no errors in terminology.*

The Student Handbook that forms the main source of information for participants is clear and accurate.

*The information provided to participants should be collated into a participants' handbook, which would ensure that it is consistent and maintained up to date.*

There is now a Student Handbook which is reviewed and updated annually, in advance of its distribution to participants and parents. It is a common point of reference for all involved in the Provider's courses and thus reduces the possibility for any misunderstandings in relation to provision and codes of conduct for participants.

*The Provider is recommended to appoint a person with overall responsibility for systematically checking that all policies and procedures are maintained up to date.*

This responsibility has been taken on by the Embedded Advisor. He has wide experience of pre-university education and brings informed insight to this aspect of his role.

#### 4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

##### 4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

##### Comments

The management team is clearly structured, with the three directors taking the roles of Head of Welfare, Head of Marketing and Logistics and Academic Coordinator. They are clear about their respective responsibilities and work effectively together. All are actively engaged in the operation of the programmes and open to ideas for modifications and improvements.

Administrative records are comprehensive and up to date. They are shared through a secured, cloud-based drive, and can be accessed by any of the management team when necessary.

The role of Embedded Advisor has been added to enable additional oversight of programme delivery. This is done in an informal way, with the postholder on site throughout the teaching day, visiting various sessions, delivering some optional mathematics activities and being available for participants to speak to, should they so wish. As many of the participants are below university age, it is particularly useful to have this input from someone whose professional background is in pedagogy of compulsory education.

##### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

##### Comments

Participants work in small tutorial groups with a tutor who has experience of the Oxford University tutorial system, either as an academic or as a graduate student. They are set readings or other preparatory tasks, with any materials needed supplied by the Provider. By the end of the course, each student will have prepared and delivered a presentation and an essay on their major subject. Initial feedback is given immediately after the presentation, with detailed graded feedback and a summary of achievements overall on the course sent subsequently.

Courses are timetabled with private study time, so that participants can work on their presentations. However, during the first week of each fortnight, this time is not fully used, and therefore the Provider is considering offering optional additional study support sessions.

Where possible, trainers are encouraged to include practical elements in their courses, such as a visit to a law court for law students or to the local covered market, for marketing and business students. All off-site visits have to be approved by the Academic Coordinator in advance. These activities increase participant engagement and broaden their perspective on their studies.

Teaching observations are undertaken, either by the Academic Coordinator or the Embedded Advisor, and useful feedback given to tutors.

Debates are organised to encourage participants to engage and share their perspectives. Additional support to develop useful skills, for example language skills, is offered in addition to the subject-based tutorials. These sessions are welcomed by the participants as part of their preparations for the essay that they have to write by the end of the course. Consideration is being given to expanding this element of the provision to support participants in further developing their study skills.

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#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

The Provider is sensitive to the potentially diverse needs of a group of participants whose ages range from 16 to 19. They arrange accommodation so that the participants are grouped by age and gender. Tutorial groups are planned bearing in mind the amount of prior study and the age of participants. Deans who are current or recent Oxford students delivering the non-academic elements of the programme, live on site during the course and take a register of participants at key points each day. The Provider employs its own night porter, as the first point of call for any issues that arise overnight.

Deans attend a training session before the start of the course and are offered first aid training, if they have not already undertaken this. They are briefed on the procedures and contact methods to be used, in case of any medical or other incident. There is, however, no handbook for deans to refer to subsequently. Safeguarding issues and the risks associated with radicalism and extremism are also covered during the training and appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken.

Directors are well-briefed on issues related to the risks of extremism and radicalisation. They have assessed these risks in relation to the provision that they offer and assess them as low. They oversee the provision in light of that assessment, with an appropriate policy in place for reporting concerns that is effectively communicated to staff and students.

Given the significant number of participants under the age of 18, the code of conduct and rules that all participants are expected to respect are designed to be appropriate for the younger members of the participant cohort.

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4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

The participants have the use of a wide range of spaces at University College, suitable for study, leisure time and recreation. They live on site, and therefore have a taster of life as a student in an Oxford or Cambridge college. The premises are well maintained and of a good standard.

Administrative staff work from an office on site during each programme and are therefore on hand to resolve any issues that might arise. They report good relations with the college staff, who are helpful throughout the planning and delivery of a programme.

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4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes

No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

The directors have a clear vision of the nature of the programme that they wish to deliver and achieve through careful planning and close engagement with participants, teaching staff and deans.

The programme has a strong academic ethos that encourages and supports self-study very well.

The academic and welfare staff work to build an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding among participants, creating a supportive environment in which participants mix widely and share new academic and social experiences.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High     Medium     Low

**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

It is recommended that the Provider plans additional study support sessions for the participants.

It is recommended that a handbook for deans is developed as a reference point on their role and responsibilities.

It is recommended that the Provider requires all staff to undertake a short online training course on Safeguarding. This would increase their awareness of good practice and ability to spot any risks that might arise at an early stage.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**